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**FUTURE ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE
FORCE XXI NATIONAL GUARD**

BY

COLONEL TRAVIS L. HOOPER
United States Army

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FUTURE ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE FORCE XXI NATIONAL GUARD

by

Colonel Travis L. Hooper
United States Army

Colonel John A. Bonin
Project Advisor

U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Colonel Travis L. Hooper

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Preparation of the ground force build-up prior to DESERT STORM revealed severe deficiencies in National Guard "Roundout" brigades training readiness. None of the three brigades which underwent an intensive 180 day train up were declared "combat ready" prior to the outbreak of hostilities. This paper reviews the causes for the failure of National Guard maneuver brigades to maintain their training proficiency. It examines whether or not the policy of fielding combat National Guard brigade size units is realistic given the performance expectations of Force XXI. The paper outlines possible solutions which allows the National Guard to continue to play a valuable role in our nation's defense and at the same time fulfill an historic position within our country's citizenry.

INTRODUCTION

The Army has relied heavily on its reserves and National Guard since the mid-1970's to accomplish its missions and provide units to the force the Active Component could not. In fact, a significant part of the Army's combat service support units, (e.g., transportation and quartermaster units), are in the reserves. Previously, the Army used combat arms brigades to fill out the CONUS based divisions which were manned at two of three authorized brigades. The National Guard brigades were aligned with Active Duty divisions to fulfill the role of the third brigade. The "roundout" brigade's role was identical to its active duty counterparts--maintain a high state of combat readiness and be prepared to deploy and fight with their division in case of war.

The need to mobilize and deploy the roundout brigades occurred for the first time during OPERATION DESERT SHIELD when the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) was alerted for deployment to the Persian Gulf.¹ The division went to the Gulf without its National Guard roundout brigade. The 197th Separate Infantry Brigade from Fort Benning, Georgia was assigned to the 24th Infantry Division in order to field a full division.

The National Guard roundout brigades, the 48th Infantry Brigade from Georgia, 155th Infantry Brigade from Mississippi, and the 256th Infantry Brigade from Louisiana, went into an intensive trainup period in preparation for deployment to the Gulf as augmentation forces. In all three cases, these brigades were not declared combat ready until after the ground war was

terminated.²

The reasons for the poor performance of these Guard brigades will be discussed in greater detail later in this report. The principle focus of this report is a deeper examination of the missions given to the National Guard combat brigades and their limitations on meeting them. Are the expectations of the Active Component too high for the Guard? In terms of training readiness over time, is the limited training time available (39 days) too short? Given the gap between the state of readiness of the active force compared with the National Guard today, it can be extrapolated forward. With the arrival of Force XXI and its drastic changes in equipment and doctrine, how can the Guard be expected to maintain any state of training proficiency which would allow them to complement the active force on the battlefield? If the answer is the Guard can't keep up, then what is the role of the National Guard in Force XXI?

The purpose of this paper is to examine these questions along with the role of the National Guard and how it can best be utilized to complement the active force. The paper outlines possible solutions which allows the National Guard to continue to play a valuable role in our nation's defense.

BACKGROUND ON THE ROUNDOUT CONCEPT

The roundout concept was born as a result of a broader policy change that occurred as the Vietnam War drew to an end in the early 1970's. At that time, the United States began a transition from a conscript army to an All-Volunteer Force (AFV).

In the absence of draftees the reserves became the principal source for rapid augmentation of the active forces in time of war or other military emergency. This reliance on reserve forces was arguably the most significant component of what became known as the "Total Force Policy."³

Specifically, roundout began as part of the Army's effort, immediately after the end of the Vietnam War in early 1973, to increase the total number of Army divisions from 13 to 16 without increasing the Army's manpower strength.⁴ One of the ways an increased number of divisions could be accommodated within constant manpower ceilings (active Army strength stayed at around 780,000 between 1974 and 1988) was to structure the new divisions with less than its full complement of brigades and to rely on the reserve components--roundout units--to bring the divisions to full strength upon mobilization.⁵

There were several rationale for activating more divisions and structuring several of them with roundout brigades. First, proponents felt that a greater number of major combat divisions, would increase the deterrence of potential enemies and the confidence levels of allies. An Army of 18 divisions conveys an important psychological message to allies and adversaries alike that an Army of 13 divisions didn't, regardless of the internal composition of these divisions.⁶

Second, reserve forces cost less than active forces although the cost savings may vary widely depending on the type of reserve unit and the resources invested in it. Some cost savings could

certainly accrue from having one brigade from several active divisions be a reserve component brigade.

Third, the Total Force Policy was supported by many senior Army general officers, including the Army Chief of Staff from July 1972-October 1974, General Creighton W. Abrams, Jr. These officers wanted to ensure that the nation's political leadership would have to seek (or feel assured of) popular support for a major conflict by requiring them to mobilize citizen-soldiers and remove them from their jobs, homes, and families. They believed that any large callup of the reserves would require a political consensus that would in turn allow the military flexibility to prosecute a conflict to military victory. If there were no such consensus, and a large callup was required to successfully wage the war, then the President (and perhaps Congress as well) would avoid entering into a major conflict in the first place.⁷

A fourth reason for activating more divisions and rounding some of them out with Guard brigades involved attempts to improve the readiness and visibility of the Army reserve components. Reserve and Guard proponents felt that by closely integrating some National Guard brigades with active divisions and assigning them the high-profile mission of bringing those active divisions to full mobilization strength, the active Army would be forced to pay more attention to the roundout units. Equipment would have to be modernized and more and better training provided. The roundout would also have an indirect effect on enhancing reserve readiness, by creating a more positive and significant general

image of all Army reserve component units and personnel.⁸

Finally, Army doctrine calls for the division to be the basic large tactical unit. Separate brigades, while having specialized utility in some circumstances or with some types of forces, do not have either the versatility or sustainability of full divisions. In the early 1970's, the Army had a large number of Guard (and a few Army Reserve) separate infantry and armored brigades for which it did not have a precise or optimum mission.⁹

TRAINING PERFORMANCE DURING OPERATION DESERT SHIELD

On 30 November 1990, two Army National Guard mechanized infantry brigades were ordered to active duty in support of OPERATION DESERT SHIELD, the United States operation to defend Saudi Arabia, and eventually, eject the Iraqi Army from Kuwait and destroy Iraqi military potential. A third, Guard armored brigade was activated on 7 December 1990. All three brigades were roundout units. Each of the three brigades activated in late 1990 was designated to join a parent active Army division upon mobilization. However, the three roundout brigades were not activated until approximately four months after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, and the beginning of OPERATION DESERT SHIELD on 6 August 1990.¹⁰ The two brigades which had parent divisions in Saudi Arabia did not deploy with those divisions. Indeed, none of the three brigades left the United States, and the only one to be "validated" as combat-ready by active Army trainers was so judged on 28 February 1991, the day of the initial ceasefire with Iraq.¹¹

What is the explanation for the poor training performance by three of the premier brigades in the National Guard? When the roundout Guard units first went on active duty in November, their commanders badly underestimated the amount of training needed to get them combat-ready. Many, from 15 percent in the 155th Armor Brigade to 19 percent in the 48th Infantry, had not been fully trained to do their assigned jobs.¹² Nearly 600 soldiers had to be given formal schooling in more than 42 different specialties. Training would have taken time away from their civilian jobs.¹³

Many Guard soldiers also lacked battlefield survival skills because the battlefield exercises in the Guard's annual two-week training stints were in most cases unrealistic. Additionally, the Army found that about one-third of the soldiers in the three roundout brigades had either dental conditions or incomplete dental records that, based Army regulations, would have prevented them from being deployed. An undetermined number of other Guard members, mostly over age 40, had serious medical ailments such as ulcers or chronic asthma. More than 250 in the 48th Brigade had to be sent to Fort Stewart, Georgia, for treatment.¹⁴

There were other problems. For example, many Guard officers and NCOs were found lacking by their active duty trainers in basic leadership skills. One brigades's NCOs suffered from a lack of initiative, of discipline, and of proficiency in basic soldiering skills and had a 'so what' attitude.¹⁵

I was involved in the training of the 256th Infantry Brigade conducted at Fort Hood, Texas and duplicated the training

undertaken by the 48th at the National Training Center. The 5th Infantry Division, of which I was a member, conducted the 256th's training utilizing the 'lane training' model (used by both the division and the brigade during their weekend drill periods). It was a training system that was familiar to the guardsmen.

The problems experienced by the 48th were identical to those in the 256th. The soldiers were highly motivated and ready to tackle any training challenge given by their active duty trainers, but a large number of NCOs and officers were often less than enthusiastic about the mission. I personally ejected a company commander from a tank range for talking on his personal cellular phone to his office while firing live ammunition on a tank range.

The performance, however, of the three roundout brigades should be considered a success rather than a failure in terms of training readiness achieved. In the case of the 48th Infantry Brigade, the 24th Infantry Division Commander, MG Barry R. McCafferey¹⁶ admitted he never planned on taking the 48th with him to the Gulf with less than 120 days of postmobilization training. He also believed it necessary to replace all Guard battalion and company executive officers with his own active component officers. He realized the brigade would require significant post-mobilization training to be adequately prepared to join the division, time allotting, in the desert. It was always the belief of those closely associated with the round-out brigades that they would require a minimum of 90 days of

intensive training to achieve C-1 in training.

In all three cases, the brigades did eventually reach the C-1 goal. However, the problem was the war was over before they reached that goal. Some of the problem lay in the last minute modernization that two of the brigades had to undergo before they could be certified for combat. This was an additional training requirement that had not been projected by Department of the Army (DA) planners when designing the roundout concept. The belief was always that the brigades would have sufficient time, 90-180 days, to ramp up their training proficiency in order to deploy to Europe and fulfill a reinforcing role. The "fire drill" call that occurred as result of DESERT SHIELD was believed by many, a "bridge too far" for the brigades.

The roundout brigades for the 24th Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions (48th Infantry from Georgia and 155th Armor from Mississippi) were not activated until four months after their parent divisions were alerted for deployment to Southwest Asia. The four reasons cited by the Army and Department of Defense (DOD) for this decision are as follows:¹⁷

First, the immediate objective of Desert Shield was to deter and defend against an Iraqi attack against Saudi Arabia. Deployment decisions, therefore, had to be made with the possibility of immediate combat upon arrival in the theater of operations. Only active forces could meet the requirement for immediate deployment and full readiness upon arrival in southwest Asia.

Second, the Commander in Chief of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, requested two full-strength heavy divisions when Desert Shield began. There was no time for postmobilization training of the roundout brigades of both heavy divisions either in the United States or in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, active

brigades had to be substituted for the roundout brigades.

Third, the request for the full-strength heavy divisions was received 16 days prior to the Presidential approval of reserve callup authority on 22 August, 1990 (in addition, the directive of Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney regarding the nature and scope of the initial reserve callup specifically excluded Army combat reserves).

Fourth, the reserve callup authority invoked by the President on August 22, 1990, and in effect until January 19, 1991, allowed reservists to be kept on active duty for maximum of 180 days (an initial 90-day period, followed by a 90-day extension at the discretion of the President). The 180 day-maximum, it was felt, precluded the effective use of the roundout brigades. By the time they finished necessary postmobilization training and deployed to Saudi Arabia, they would have very little time remaining before they would have to either be demobilized or have their active duty extended under other statutory authority.¹⁸

Understandably, DOD and the Army wanted to avoid activating reserve units for which no real requirement was evident. During the Berlin Crisis of 1961, when 150,000 reservists were activated, large numbers were both not needed and not ready, and their resentment at being activated for no apparent reason, plus their poor state of readiness, had major political repercussions.¹⁹ DOD policymakers appeared determined to avoid calling up anybody for whom meaningful military missions might not be available right away.

As was noted earlier, after being called up in late November-early December, the 48th, 155th, and 256th Brigades received three, four, and five months of postmobilization training respectively. Only one brigade, the 48th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) of the Georgia Army National Guard, originally the roundout brigade of the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), was formally validated by the active Army as being

ready for deployment. This validation occurred on 28 February 1991, the date of the ceasefire with Iraq. Thus, for the 48th Brigade, approximately 90 days of postmobilization training were required before it was considered ready for war. The validation process for the other two brigades was interrupted by the end of hostilities. The 155th Armored Brigade of the Mississippi Army Guard, roundout to the 1st Cavalry Division, was anticipated to be validated on March 22, 1991, about 105 days after it was activated. The 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) of the Louisiana Army Guard, roundout to the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), was scheduled for validation on 13 April 1991, 135 days after activation.²⁰

Pre-Gulf War estimates as to how much training would be required vary greatly. An Army response to questions from the House Armed Services Committee written after hostilities ended stated that there were no scenarios under which roundout brigades deployed before post-mobilization training; whether the training time was minimal or substantial dependent on the unit's combat readiness. The Army National Guard has argued that the roundout brigades met Department of the Army standards for deployability when federalized and could easily have been deployed within the 30-60 day period. Only after they were federalized were the deployability criteria changed to reflect a much higher standard. Similarly, based on the fact that all three roundout brigades were rated either C-2 or C-3 in the joint readiness reporting system of DOD, they should have required between 15-28 days (C-2)

or 29-42 days (C-3) of postmobilization training to be ready for deployment, according to 1987 testimony from the CINC of U. S. Forces Command.²¹

CHANGING THE ROLE FOR THE NATIONAL GUARD

Given the evidence discussed thus far, opponents to the National Guard could argue that the Guard doesn't fit in the plans of the Total Force Army of the next century. I would argue that this conclusion would be wrong. The nation and the Army needs the National Guard for all the reasons laid out by General Abrams and others in the days following Vietnam. It is the role of the Guard that must be examined in view of the changing world politics and nature of future conflicts.

The 1995 National Guard Posture Statement states that the National Guard today consists of 410,000 soldiers and represents 2.3 percent of the total Department of Defense budget and 9.6 percent of the overall Army budget. The Guard currently provides 53 percent of the combat, 34 percent of combat support, and 34 percent of the combat service support forces of the total Army.²²

Missions assigned to various Guard units have played a significant role and made a positive contribution in fighting the war on Drugs as authorized by the 1989 National Defense Authorization Act. During fiscal year 1993, for example, Army Guard soldiers participated in 4,182 operations, totaling 1,109,359 training days, in all 54 Guard jurisdictions. They assisted various law enforcement agencies, principally the U.S.

Customs Service, in the seizure of over 485,233 pounds of marijuana, 127,248 pounds of processed cocaine, and 1,378 pounds of heroin. They also confiscated 9,218 weapons, 512,574 rounds of ammunition and \$94,834,239 in cash and supported operations that resulted in 44,619 arrests.²³

Observing the impressive contributions made by the Guard in nonstandard military missions (e.g., natural disaster relief, nation building operations in South America, and drug operations) and the successful support operations provided during OPERATION DESERT STORM only strengthens the argument for continuing the presence of the National Guard in future U.S. defense plans. The difficulty is determining where that role is in relation to the drastic changes taking place in future force structure plans.

Future Guard missions must take into account their limitations of a 39 day annual training cycle. It is unreasonable to expect the Guard to perform at a C-1 level given the little amount of time allowed for training. Even active force commanders, with over 200 training days, frequently complain of the difficulty of achieving C-1 given the complexity of the missions and equipment. Expecting the guard to perform at this level with only 39 training days is unrealistic.

Future conflicts and other military operations appear to have one feature in common. They will be short or no-notice operations which will require an immediate projection of U.S. military resolve. It is most likely that the U.S. forces involved will deploy from the United States. Any accompanying reserve or

Guard forces must be able to mobilize and deploy with little or no train-up time. Many of the guard combat support and combat service support units which served in the Gulf War were able to execute their rapid deployment to the Gulf as efficiently as their active duty cohorts. The problem is preparing Guard Combat Maneuver units to be able to execute short notice deployments with little train-up time.

Part of the problem is that shrinking defense dollars has had a negative impact on training. A recent report in The Army Times states,

there has not been enough money to keep Army Guard combat units fully combat ready. The best Guard combat units are probable at a C-2 readiness level, that is, they have the required resources and are trained to undertake most, 80 Percent to 89 percent, wartime missions. But the majority of Guard units are at a C-3 readiness level; they have the resources and training to undertake many, 70 percent to 79 percent, wartime missions, but would require significant compensation for deficiencies, according to an official at the National Guard Bureau in the Pentagon.²⁴

At the heart of the Guard training issue is the identification of the type of Guard unit which can accomplish its mission with little or no train-up time. The problem of training reserve component maneuver combat units of company size and larger was articulated by General Edwin H. Burba, Jr. Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Force Command, in testimony before the Defense Policy Panel of the House Armed Services Committee on 8 March 1991:

Why couldn't we have had the roundout units at sufficient readiness posture to have deployed quickly with their parent divisions? Why is it so challenging to keep our reserve combat units at high readiness posture when we have reasonable good success with our support units?

The answer is these latter combat support and combat service support units generally have uncomplicated unit functions, even though many of their individual skills are complex. They include units with civilian equivalencies, such as medical, maintenance, transportation and supply as well as equipment-oriented unitary task specialties that can be accommodated during weekend training such as aviation, artillery, air defense, and engineers.

On the other hand, combat units, such as armored cavalry, infantry, and armor have maneuver skills and complex synchronization skills at company level and higher that are difficult to train during weekend drill periods. The training of these combat units at company level and higher integrates not only maneuver skills, but those of Army aviation and Air Force lift and fire support, artillery, air defense, engineer, signal, military intelligence, maintenance, supply, transportation, medical, military police, chemical, and a whole host of others.

They have to synchronize everything that we do on the battlefield. The tasks and standards associated with these synchronized skills change at all levels as battlefield conditions change. Their execution is more an art than a science, and they take considerable time and effort to master.²⁵

The current commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized), a brigade commander in the 5th Infantry Division during the Gulf War stated in an interview that, "(m)aneuver is too hard for anyone at the maneuver unit to maintain any decent level of proficiency. Active duty units struggle with this one. It is a bridge too far to expect National Guardsmen to be able to execute this difficult task with only 39 training days."²⁶

The art of synchronization along with mastering the art of maneuver is the key to dominating on the battlefield. Maneuver is defined in Warfighting Vision 2010 as "the movement of forces in the battlespace to create tactical and operational advantage".²⁷ This publication also states that future warfare will also change

the role of the Guard and reserves. "Conflict with its increased lethality, and requirements for quick reaction and coordinated attack places a premium on organizations capable of operating with little or no notice, limited train-up periods and the ability to tie together a myriad of sophisticated systems into one well-coordinated whole. While the requirement for reserve forces remains, their role in this force for the future changes."²⁸

CHANGES IN THE NATIONAL GUARD

Several initiatives have begun examining new ways of organizing the guard to allow it the capability to be ready when needed. The October 1993 Report on the Bottom-Up Review and the Defense Planning Guidance, dated 28 September 1993, called for 15 Army National Guard Enhanced Readiness Brigades, organized and resourced to be quickly mobilized, trained, and deployed to fast-evolving major regional conflicts. The goal established in these documents is to have the brigades ready to begin deployment at the highest readiness rating, C-1, no later than 90 days after mobilization.

The enhanced brigades are intended to provide the strategic hedge against an adverse major regional conflict, especially in the two, nearly simultaneous, major regional conflict scenario, referred to in the Defense Planning Guidance. The enhanced brigades will be used to reinforce or augment Active Component forces deployed to a regional conflict. They may also be used to backfill Active Component overseas presence forces that have been

committed out of theater. Finally, Enhanced Brigades will be capable of supporting rotational missions when protracted Active Component deployment to a major regional conflict requires relief of committed forces.²⁹

The Enhanced Brigades will normally operate as part of an Active Component division or corps. Enhanced Brigades will be associated with Active Component divisions or corps for training. The peacetime alignment with an Active Component unit is not intended to dictate wartime employment. The Enhanced Brigades will be flexible enough to deploy and fight with any active component division or corps.³⁰

A new wrinkle in the enhanced brigade concept is that smaller units, 1,000 man battalions or small task forces , within the brigade could be sent into combat on relatively short notice in an emergency, such as having to fight two regional wars at the same time.³¹ According to U.S. Senator Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, "I know the brigade wants to stay together, but the Guard is going to have to look at a call-up of smaller units for emergencies."³² Further, MG William B. Bland, adjutant general and commander of the Georgia Guard stated, "a small unit call-up has to be taken into account because a squad, platoon or company may have to be ready to fight 74 to 96 hours after mobilization."³³

Another recent and controversial proposal on restructuring the Guard converts 60,000 combat arms spaces into combat support and service support spaces. This realignment proposal would

satisfy a severe shortage in the active component identified by the Commission on Roles and Missions.

During a recent three-day conference in Washington, the National Guard's 54 adjutants general approved a plan to reconfigure 11 combat brigades and one scout unit from their current combat missions to combat support and combat service support responsibilities.³⁴ The 11 brigades have not been identified yet; the scout group is based in Alaska.³⁵

This organization would leave the guard with 12 non-enhanced combat brigades. The Guard wants to place six of those under direct management of the active-duty Army in two proposed Army divisions. This part of the plan is intended to better integrate the National Guard into the active-duty Army. The active-duty force would be responsible for training, equipping and deploying the six Army Guard brigades.³⁶ The proposal would place active duty personnel in these division headquarters, but the troops may include some of the Guard's "enhanced readiness" brigades.

Turning combat brigades into support brigades will mean buying new equipment, especially trucks and other vehicles. It will also mean training tens of thousands of troops to do new jobs. Turning an infantry soldier into a transportation specialist will probably not require extensive training. However, turning a tank crewman into a mechanic could require years of extensive and expensive schooling. Unofficial estimates put the cost of the conversion as high as \$3 billion.³⁷

The National Guard views the reorganization as an attack on their rightful and earned position in the Department of Defense. They point to their important contributions in every major conflict. Retired MG Edward Philbin, director of the National Guard Association, denounced proposals to convert combat units as "emasculated of the combat role" of the National Guard and warned that it "would be a monumental military blunder."³⁸ According to MG Gerald Miller, CG, 34th Infantry Division, Minnesota National Guard, "(t)he Guard Divisions are important because they serve as a strategic hedge against future conflict in an uncertain world. Maintaining a large active Army is a relatively recent phenomenon in U.S. history."³⁹

The argument, however returns to the fiscal realities facing today's military. As the defense budget continues to shrink, there has not been enough money to keep Army Guard combat units fully combat ready. Funding of the National Guard cannot be based on emotion tied to history. Today's hard fiscal realities requires a harsh examination of resources based on capabilities and needs. Since they have a history of not being used, Army Guard combat units have been placed at the end of the military funding chain. They receive only half the money they need to hire their authorized number of full-time personnel and they are manned at only 86 percent of their authorized end strength.⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to review the performance and surrounding discussion on the ability of the National Guard

combat units to realistically execute their mission in the next decade. As was demonstrated by their performance during Desert Shield, National Guard training readiness was lower than expected. The changes proposed by both the active duty and National Guard staffs have not predicted an increase in the guard units capabilities to mobilize and deploy within a reasonable time limit. Given the perceived wartime missions in the next decade, along with the development of a more complicated family of equipment associated with Force XXI, the National Guard combat units will not be able to reduce their post-mobilization training time. In fact, the Force XXI add-ons may increase it.

Although the Guard argument to rely on the Brigade as the smallest deployable unit is understandable, the reality may be that battalions or company teams located near active duty divisions may be the near term solution. These smaller units would have access to active duty training facilities and could even be aligned with active duty brigades or battalions. Training provided by their active duty sponsors would be more tailored to that guard unit's specific training and resource needs. Exiting active duty soldiers from the battalion or brigade could be recruited to maintain the highest personnel fill levels in the guard battalions or companies.

Whatever the solution, the Army National Guard will continue to fulfill an important role in America's Army. The concept of the citizen Army is as valid today as it was 200 years ago. It is the manner in which this vital force is used that is in question.

Given the reduced availability of funds it is unrealistic to continue to fund an organization that cannot perform its combat mission in the time frame expected. The American people expect us as the stewards of freedom to wisely use our resources to produce the most efficient force possible. The changing roles and missions of the Army in Force XXI dictates radical changes in force structures. The active force is closely examining ways to make itself smaller and more lethal. The National Guard must be prepared to perform this same selfless examination.

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